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The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC 00976-86
25 February 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: D/NESA
C/NE/DDO

FROM: Graham E. Fuller, VC/NIC

SUBJECT: NSC Report Interest in Reporting on Syria

1. NSC Director for Middle East Affairs, Jock Covey, recently mentioned to me his strong interests in renewed focus on Syria. NSC believes that Syrian militancy and obdurateness are the chief obstacles to getting any motion on the peace process. The death of Assad could obviously have considerable impact on the Syrian role.

2. Specifically, Covey asks that we try to focus []
[] on the succession question and any special Soviet role in it:

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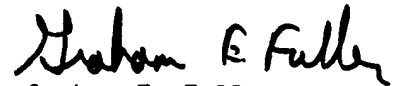
- Do we see any signs of further jockeying for power given Assad's poor health?
- Do we have any information on contingency planning by any Syrian political elements after Assad's death?
- Who will be the critical determinants in resolving the succession question after Assad's death?
- Are there any informal coalitions developing that might hold together after Assad?
- What is the Soviet view of the succession question?
- Can we not assume that the Soviets will be intensely concerned over, and active in, the succession question given Soviet high stakes in Syria?
- What assets do the USSR possess to influence the succession?

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3. Covey is likely to send a formal written request along this line at some point but wanted to be sure that we were all taking a very close look at this important--possibly watershed--issue.


Graham E. Fuller

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